

Barns Green Players' latest pantomime, Goldilocks & the 3 Bears was performed to very full houses over four days and six performances. The much-awaited return to traditional panto, but "with a twist". The twist being that the baddies were a small swarm of bees, ruled by a villainous Queen Bee (Tracey Francis). She had devised an evil plan to feed hypno honey to the bears, so that they would attack all human beings, giving her total dominance over the world.

Needless to say her plan failed miserably due in no small part to the brilliant bumbling bees who were aided and abetted by Kevin the wasp. Kevin was a gift of a part and Hazel Bailey gave a delightful performance as the wasp who had joined the beehive as part of an exchange scheme to develop better insect cooperation!

The director, Neale Francis, decided in another twist to set the panto in the 1950's so that the teddy bears' picnic could be transformed into the Teddy Boys' picnic, with the bear chorus dressed in Teddy Boy jackets and Elvis wigs. One of the highlights of the show was the whole cast performing a great version of Michael Jackson's Thriller to close the first half. The hypnotised bears coming down into the audience to do their zombie dance.

Jan Critchley, Bridget Tidey and Raife Tansey were enchanting as the 3 bears and, in yet another twist, listening to their accents, obviously came down from the Scottish Highlands.

As usual there was plenty of audience participation encouraged by Graeme Muncer as the dame Auntie Septic, with Nigel Baker and Winks Parrish as Splinter and Choppit the two, nice but dim, royal woodsmen. Their performance of the Lumberjack song was hilarious.

There were several youngsters in the show including the heroine Goldilocks (Emily Poots) and her love interest Tom Tom (Dan Bird), who had found his way to the village by satellite navigation - of course! They had to cope with a lively audience and the experience should stand them in good stead for the future.

The scenery was bright, cheerful and simple but very effective. It was complemented by the colourful costumes all made by a team of local ladies led by Jan Critchley. I especially admired the Dame's outfits and the bees & wasp costumes.

Scenery changes were smoothly and soundlessly executed by a great team of backstage workers and the lights and special effects were spot on as we have come to expect from the Barns Green Players.  
Did I enjoy it? Yes! Yes! Yes!

From your Roving Reporter